

Mysteries in the Graveyards

by Kenita Gibbins

I no longer know what is truth and what I conjure up in my imagination. When I arrived at age seven, the story of the lovely lady monument in Oak Park Cemetery in Chandler, Oklahoma, made me want to stay away from the very pretty graveyard. The tale as I remember involved a young girl dying at the foot of the statue late at night when the moon was full.

She had come to the monument to honor the deceased and had been bitten by a stinging scorpion. I went through my entire adolescence fearing this one site.

As I grew older I started to be interested in the statue in the cemetery because she sometimes held a flower across her arms. No one seemed to know why the various flowers appeared or who placed them. It just happened for as long as I can remember. Suddenly there were no more flowers.

I went back to my hometown for a funeral service held at the cemetery in the spring of 2016. I walked over to visit the lady. She had a flower again. No one at the service knew why. I don't know if the flower was in honor of the lady of the monument or the girl who I think died at her feet. Someone knows!

Once again I got the story mixed up in my mind. I took a creative writing class at Emily Griffith Opportunity School. Our teacher Yvonne Tessler did a great job stirring up our critical thinking. I swear she told us a story about Mary Coyle Chase and her character "Harvey" from the Broadway play of the same name. Yvonne told us Mary Chase is buried at Crown Hill Cemetery in Denver, Colorado. She died in 1981 at the age of 75. Yvonne went on to tell us that Harvey is buried behind her. I heard and remembered what I wanted to hear and remember. The picture in my head for years had Mrs. Chase buried under a nice size headstone and to the right of her headstone in a corner was Harvey's small headstone. Both graves had a very nice little, short picket fence around them.

Years later I drove passed Crown Hill, turned my car around and went to find Mary Chase's grave. The information desk clerk couldn't find the exact site, but described where she thought it was. I drove round and round. I stopped and walked. The next day I went back to the cemetery's office and asked again for a map. This time one was found for me. I located two rather nondescript grave markers with the names of Mary and Robert Chase. I looked and looked for Harvey's little marker and saw nothing. I didn't even see a little rabbit hopping. I decided to get down on my knees and take a picture since I had gone to so much trouble. I was astonished to see a big marker sticking up behind Mr. and Mrs. Chase. In bold letters I saw HARVEY. The Harvey family coincidentally had been buried behind the Chases!